

Calabria Territory - Italy

Tourism, living and working



Calabria is a region in southern Italy, known as the "toe" of the Italian boot, bordering the Ionian and Tyrrhenian Seas and separated from Sicily by the Strait of Messina. It is a territory rich in history, culture, and diverse landscapes, from mountainous areas like the Aspromonte massif to beautiful coasts with sandy beaches and clear blue waters. Its territory is characterized by ancient Greek settlements, Roman, Byzantine, and Norman influences, as well as significant natural parks,

making it a historically and geographically distinct area.

- Geography and Location:

- * **Location:** Situated at the southern tip of the Italian Peninsula.

- * **Seas:** Bounded by the Ionian Sea to the east and the Tyrrhenian Sea to the west.

- * **Strait of Messina:** Separates Calabria from the island of Sicily to the southwest.

- * **Landscape:** A predominantly mountainous territory with high mountains, alternating with coastal plains, and crossed by rivers.

- History and Culture:

- * **Ancient Origins:**

Originally known as Bruttium in ancient times, it was a significant part of the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia.

- * **Diverse Influences:**

The territory has been shaped by various cultures and dominations, including the Italic populations, Ancient Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Normans, and later dynasties.

- * **Linguistic Heritage:**

Small linguistic communities

of Greek, Albanian, and Occitan origin still exist, preserving ancient traditions.

- Key Cities and Provinces:

*** Capital:** Catanzaro is the regional capital.

*** Major Cities:** Other significant cities include Cosenza, Crotona, and Reggio Calabria.

The cost of living in Calabria, Italy, is generally low compared to other Italian regions, making it an attractive option for those seeking affordable living, especially for retirees and expats. Monthly expenses for a single person can be as low as €1,200, with significant savings possible on housing, with a one-bedroom apartment costing around €300-€400 in larger towns like Reggio Calabria. Grocery prices are also relatively low, but can vary, while healthcare is inexpensive and of high quality, especially for residents who qualify for the national insurance system after six months of residency.

- * **Rent:** You can find a one-bedroom apartment in Reggio Calabria for about €425 per month, and even cheaper outside the city center, around €295.
- * **Groceries:** Expect to pay around €1.10 for a liter of milk and €2.95 for a dozen eggs, though prices can vary.
- * **Healthcare:** The Italian national healthcare system is affordable for residents, with total annual medical costs potentially under €1,400 for two people, as highlighted by a couple living there, with costs varying by province.
- * **Taxes for Expats:** The region offers a 7% flat tax regime for certain foreign retirees, which can significantly lower living costs.

Salaries in the Calabria region of Italy vary significantly by profession, with an average annual salary for a Territory Sales Manager in Reggio Calabria being around €60,696, while the average for an "Impiegato" (office clerk) can be between €24,000-€30,000 per year. Additionally, Calabria offers financial incentives of up to \$47,000 (€30,000-€33,000) to attract people under 40 to move to depopulated towns and start businesses or fill

specific professional roles.

- Average Salaries in Calabria:

*** Territory Sales Manager:**

The average salary is €60,696 annually, or €29 per hour in Reggio Calabria, according to SalaryExpert.

*** Impiegato (Office Clerk):**

Average annual salaries range from €24,000 to €30,000, with some employers, like Poste Italiane, offering within this range.

- General Average:

The average salary in Reggio Calabria is reported to be €32,699 per year.

- Calabria's Financial Incentive Program:

*** Active Residence Income:**

The region offers a financial incentive for people aged 18 to 40 to move to smaller towns in an effort to revitalize them.

*** Incentive Amount:**

The program provides a sum of approximately €30,000 to €33,000 (\$47,000).

*** Requirements:**

To qualify, new residents must commit to relocating within 90 days of application approval, and either

start a new business or take on a pre-existing role in a required profession.

*** Funds Distribution:**

The incentive can be disbursed as a lump sum to support the new business or as monthly installments over a period of two to three years.

- Reggio Calabria:

The largest city by population and home to the famous Riace Bronzes, ancient Greek statues displayed at the Archaeological Museum.

- Natural Attractions:

*** Mountains and Parks:**

Features protected areas like the Sila National Park and the Pollino National Park, known for their diverse flora and fauna.

*** Beaches and Coasts:**

Boasts beautiful golden beaches and rocky coasts, such as the famous Capo Vaticano, popular for water sports and clear waters.

*** Archaeological Sites:**

The region is rich in archaeological finds, including those at the Capo Rizzuto Marine Protected Area, the largest in Italy.

- Cities and economy:



1. Reggio Calabria economy:

Reggio Calabria's economy relies on agriculture, particularly citrus and olive cultivation, and fishing, benefiting from its coastal location. The services sector is a major income source, while the local production of bergamot, a citrus fruit for perfumes and food, is a key specialty. The city is also a tourist destination, supported by its beaches and historical sites. Despite its diverse activities, Reggio Calabria faces economic challenges,

including a per capita income below the national average and an unemployment rate over 20%.

- **Key Sectors:**

* **Agriculture:** The cultivation of olives and citrus fruits, most notably the bergamot orange, forms a significant part of the local economy.

* **Fishing:** With its position on the Strait of Messina, fishing is a well-developed industry in the area.

* **Services:** The services sector accounts for a large portion of the city's income.

* **Tourism:** The city's beautiful beaches and historical landmarks attract tourists.

- **Economic Characteristics:**

* **Bergamot Production:**

Reggio Calabria is famous for its bergamot oranges, an essence used in perfumes, cosmetics, and as a flavoring for Earl Grey tea and local desserts.

* **Per Capita Income:**

The per capita income in Reggio Calabria is below the Italian average.

* **Unemployment:**

The region experiences a high unemployment rate,

with figures exceeding 20%.

*** EU Funding:**

As one of Italy's metropolitan cities, Reggio Calabria receives EU funding to support infrastructure, environmental projects, and citizen welfare.

Economic Challenges and Initiatives

"Weak Development":

The broader Calabrian economy is described as having a pattern of "weak development," struggling to keep pace with more developed regions during economic expansions and downturns.

- Economic Disadvantage:

Policies are in place to address the socio-economic disadvantage of vulnerable groups, including the Roma community.

*** Digital Divide:**

Initiatives are underway to increase digital competencies and reduce the digital divide among citizens.

*** Sustainability:**

The city is promoting health and sustainability awareness campaigns to foster civic consciousness and improve citizen welfare.

2. Catanzaro economy:

Catanzaro's economy is driven by diverse sectors including traditional textile manufacturing, with ongoing efforts to revive the silk industry, agriculture focused on olives and wine, and a growing tourism sector attracted by the region's natural beauty and authentic, off-the-beaten-path experience. The city is actively pursuing modernization and sustainable development, participating in EU initiatives like the Intelligent Cities Challenge to promote smart urban development, e-government, and ecological transition. A strategic port also supports regional trade, with ongoing investments in infrastructure to enhance its accessibility and economic role.

- Key Economic Drivers:

*** Textile and Silk Manufacturing:**

The province has a long history of textile production, particularly silk, with traditional sericulture and the production of Calabrian shawls (vancale).

*** Agriculture:**

The region benefits from agriculture, with an important role for olive oil and wine production,

contributing to its trade balance.

*** Tourism:**

Coastal towns are becoming increasingly popular for their authentic Italian experience, attracting tourists seeking unspoiled landscapes and cultural heritage.

*** Strategic Port:**

Catanzaro's port acts as a crucial economic hub, supporting regional trade and transportation for the Calabria region.

- Modernization and Sustainable Development:

*** Intelligent City Initiatives:**

Catanzaro is engaged in EU programs like the Intelligent Cities Challenge, focusing on sustainable urban development, e-government, and ecological transition.

*** Local Green Deal:**

The city has established a Local Green Deal to support organic policies, ecological transition, and environmental protection in alignment with the UN's Agenda 2030.

*** Infrastructure Investment:**

The province is investing in infrastructure, especially

along the coast, to improve accessibility and support its economic growth.

- Economic Focus Areas:

*** Research and Innovation:**

The city is recognized for its innovative approach to social cohesion, urban regeneration, and multicultural integration.

*** Smart Urban Models:**

Catanzaro aims to promote sustainable, intelligent, and inclusive urban models through participation in the Smart Cities of Europe network.

*** Financial Education:**

The local branch of the Banca d'Italia runs projects aimed at small entrepreneurs to improve financial literacy and manage company funds effectively.

3. Cosenza economy:

Cosenza's economy relies significantly on its rich agricultural sector, particularly citrus, figs, and olive oil production, with local products like Bruzio PDO extra-virgin olive oil and "Fichi di Cosenza PDO" earning European quality labels. The region

also has a strong focus on commerce, manufacturing, and hospitality, though it faces a high unemployment rate compared to the national average. The presence of the "CORAP industrial area" highlights efforts to support industrial development within the region.

- Key Economic Drivers:

*** Agriculture:**

The plains and valleys of Cosenza are covered with abundant citrus groves, orchards, and olive groves, making agriculture a primary economic pillar.

*** Quality Products:**

The province boasts quality-branded products such as Bruzio PDO extra-virgin olive oil and Fichi di Cosenza PDO (dried figs), which are protected by European Union quality labels.

*** Agro-food Industry:**

There's a growing focus on developing and improving the agro-food supply chain, particularly for specialty products like dried figs, to boost the rural economy.

- Sectors & Employment:

- * Agriculture:** This sector is a major employer in Cosenza, employing a significant portion of the workforce in the province.
- * Commerce & Hospitality:** The commerce, hospitality, and food service sectors also play a substantial role in the local economy.
- * Manufacturing:** The region also has a presence in the manufacturing sector.

- Economic Challenges:

- * High Unemployment:** Cosenza faces a challenge with a high unemployment rate, which is notably higher than the national average.

- Industrial Development:

- * Industrial Areas:** Efforts are in place to foster industrial growth through designated industrial areas, such as the CORAP Consortium Area.
- * Special Economic Zones:** The presence of Special Economic Zones within the region indicates a focus on attracting investment and promoting business.

4. Crotone economy:

Crotone's economy relies primarily on agriculture, especially olives and citrus fruits, and tourism, leveraging its beaches and historical sites. Historically, industrial development occurred between the World Wars with the rise and subsequent collapse of major employers like Pertusola Sud and Montedison, leading to a significant economic crisis in the late 1980s. In more recent times, the region has focused on revitalizing its economy through agribusiness, promoting local products such as wine and seafood, and developing sustainable initiatives like the offshore wind farm in the area.

- Key Economic Sectors:

*** Agriculture:** The province is known for olive oil, wine, and citrus fruits, which contribute significantly to the local economy and tourism.

*** Fishing:** The production of seafood is a key industry, boosted by Crotone's coastal location.

*** Tourism:** Crotone's beautiful beaches and historical sites attract visitors, providing a boost to the local economy through hotels, restaurants, and

shops.

- Industry (Historical & Current):

While Crotone once had a significant industrial base with companies like Montedison, it faced a collapse that led to a severe economic crisis. More recently, the city is looking to sustainable industries, including a biomass-fired power plant and the development of an offshore wind farm.

*** Craftsmanship:**

The region is also recognized for its traditional crafts, such as hand-painted pottery and woven textiles.

- Economic Challenges and Revitalization:

*** Past Industrial Decline:**

The collapse of major industries in the late 20th century caused a severe economic crisis, job losses, and migration for work.

*** Shift to Sustainability:**

Crotone is implementing projects focused on sustainability, including an offshore wind farm to meet the energy needs of the project area and promoting renewable energy initiatives.

*** Focus on Agribusiness:**

There is a renewed emphasis on agribusiness to leverage the region's agricultural potential and local products.

*** Urban Regeneration:**

The city is working on projects for urban renewal and revitalization, with a focus on improving infrastructure and the quality of life for its residents.

5. Vibo Valentia economy:

Vibo Valentia's economy relies on agriculture, fishing, commerce, and tourism, with key products including local tuna, olive oil, and specific products like 'nduja sausage.

The region also has some manufacturing, particularly in the agro-industry and mechanical engineering sectors, supported by initiatives like a Special Economic Zone. Vibo Marina's harbor plays a crucial role, facilitating trade and connections to the sea.

- Key Economic Sectors:

*** Agriculture and Agro-Industry:**

The economy benefits from its agricultural base,

including vineyards, olive groves, and citrus fruits. There's also a significant agro-industrial sector focused on processing local fish and agricultural products.

*** Fishing:**

Vibo Marina is a major port for fishing, especially tuna, which is a significant local product.

*** Commerce:**

The city functions as a commercial center, utilizing its port facilities for various goods.

*** Tourism:**

Vibo Valentia and its surrounding areas are recognized tourist destinations, attracting visitors to the region.

*** Manufacturing:**

While smaller, there are manufacturing activities, including the tuna industry and the mechanical sector, which supports the petrochemical industry through local subcontracting.

- Trade and Infrastructure:

*** Vibo Marina:**

The port is central to the local economy, handling commercial trade and fish sales.

*** Special Economic Zone (SEZ):**

The city has an SEZ that offers facilities and incentives to support manufacturing, logistics, and transport companies, fostering growth in the area.

- Notable Products:

*** 'Nduja di Spilinga:** A famous spicy sausage originating from the province.

*** Tuna:** Local tuna is a key product, contributing to the fishing and agro-industrial sectors.

*** Pizzo Truffle Ice Cream:** World-renowned ice cream from Pizzo.

*** Tropea Onions:** Sweet red onions from Tropea, a product of the province.

*** Fileja Pasta:** A traditional pasta dish that is a treat for visitors.

*** Olive Oil:** The province produces high-quality olive oil.

- A Visitor's Guide to Public Transportation in Calabria

<https://www.gogocalabria.com/post/a-visitor-s-guide-to-public-transportation-in-calabria>

- Immigration:

In 2025, the "asylum program" in Calabria, as part of Italy's broader system, focuses on labor mobility schemes like "Oikos Calabria" for socio-economic integration of refugees into the regional workforce, alongside community sponsorship programs and efforts to house migrants in more dignified settings than shanty towns. The "Labour Corridors for Refugees" initiative, launched in January 2025, brings refugees from different regions of the world, with the potential for some to be placed in Calabria for training and employment.

- Integration and Housing Efforts:

*** Housing and Integration:**

Efforts are being made to relocate migrants from substandard living conditions in shanty towns to more permanent, dignified housing, often with the help of local authorities and European funds.

*** Community-Based Projects:**

The municipality of Satriano in Calabria is renovating historic buildings to host refugees and integrating them into the community through shared activities with local seniors and social outings.

*** FAMI Fund:**

The Italian Fund for Asylum, Migration and Integration (FAMI) supports integration projects, including measures for housing and employment in Calabria.

- Google maps:

1. Reggio Calabria

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Reggio%20Calabria+Italy>

2. Catanzaro

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Catanzaro+Italy>

3. Cosenza

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Cosenza+Italy>

4. Crotone

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5. Vibo Valentia

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By: Haytham Zeidan

<https://archive.org/details/@wazefapress>

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